

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A bobbin case assembly comprising:
 - a wall structure mountable operably upon a support and defining a first receptacle within which a supply of thread is stored; and
 - a tensioning assembly for exerting a frictional force on thread extending away from the receptacle to thereby resist drawing of the thread out of the receptacle,
 - the tensioning assembly comprising a first surface that bears against the thread extending away from the receptacle,
 - at least one of the wall structure and tensioning assembly comprising a second surface,
 - the thread extending away from the receptacle residing between the first and second surfaces so that the frictional force on the thread is generated between the first and second surfaces,
 - at least one of the first and second surfaces defined by a body that is bendable to thereby allow the one of the first and second surfaces to be moved selectively towards and away from the other of the first and second surfaces,
 - the body comprising a mounting portion and a flexing portion which projects away from the mounting portion,
 - the flexing portion bendable relative to the mounting portion and comprising a first flexing region and a second flexing region,
 - the second flexing region more flexible in bending relative to the first flexing region than the first flexing region is flexible in bending relative to the mounting portion,
 - the first surface defined on the second flexing region.

wherein the first and second flexing regions are connected by a hinge portion.

wherein the body has a length and the first and second flexing regions are spaced from each other lengthwise of the body.

wherein the body has a cross-sectional area as viewed in a plane extending transversely to the length of the body and the hinge portion has a cross-sectional area that is less than the cross-sectional area of first and second portions of the body that are spaced from each other lengthwise of the body and between which the hinge portion resides.

2.-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Original) The bobbin case assembly according to claim 1 wherein the body has a length, the first and second flexing regions are spaced from each other lengthwise of the body, the body has a cross-sectional area as viewed in a plane extending transversely to the length of the body and the cross-sectional area of at least a part of the second flexing region is less than the cross-sectional area of at least a part of the first flexing region to allow a two-stage flexing of the body as the first surface bears against the thread.

6. (Original) The bobbin case assembly according to claim 1 wherein the tensioning assembly is selectively adjustable to set and maintain a plurality of different magnitudes of frictional force on the thread extending away from the receptacle.

7. (Original) The bobbin case assembly according to claim 6 wherein the tensioning assembly is selectively adjustable through a threaded fastener.

8. (Original) The bobbin case assembly according to claim 1 wherein the wall structure has a peripheral wall which defines the second surface.

9. (Original) The bobbin case assembly according to claim 8 wherein the thread projects from the receptacle through the peripheral wall.

10. (Original) The bobbin case assembly according to claim 1 wherein the body comprises a flat material with oppositely facing surfaces and one of the oppositely facing surfaces defines the first surface.

11. (Original) The bobbin case assembly according to claim 10 wherein the wall structure has a peripheral wall with a curved shape and the body is shaped to at least nominally match the curved shape of the peripheral wall.

12. (Original) The bobbin case assembly according to claim 1 in combination with a thread drawing mechanism for engaging and drawing thread from the receptacle.

13. (Original) The bobbin case assembly according to claim 12 further in combination with at least one component for generating stitching using thread drawn from the receptacle by the thread drawing mechanism.

14. (Original) In combination:

a) a bobbin case assembly comprising a wall structure mountable operably upon a support and defining a receptacle within which a supply of thread is stored;

b) a first tensioning assembly having a first body for exerting a two stage frictional force on thread extending away from the receptacle to thereby resist drawing of the thread out of the receptacle; and

c) a second tensioning assembly having a second body for exerting a two stage frictional force on thread extending away from the receptacle to thereby resist drawing of the thread out of the receptacle,

the first and second tensioning assemblies having different frictional force generating characteristics,

the first and second tensioning assemblies interchangeably operatively mountable on the wall structure to allow selection of desired force generating characteristics.

15. (Original) The combination according to claim 14 wherein the first body comprises a first material and the second body comprises a second material, the difference in the first and second materials accounting for different frictional force generating characteristics with the first and second tensioning assemblies operatively mounted on the wall structure.

16. (Original) The combination according to claim 14 wherein the first and second bodies have different dimensions that account for different frictional force

generating characteristics with the first and second tensioning assemblies operatively mounted on the wall structure.

17. (Original) The combination according to claim 14 wherein the first and second bodies have different configurations that account for different frictional force generating characteristics with the first and second tensioning assemblies operatively mounted on the wall structure.

18. (Original) The combination according to claim 14 wherein the first body comprises a first mounting portion and a first flexing portion which projects away from the first mounting portion, the first flexing portion bendable relative to the first mounting portion and comprising a first flexing region and a second flexing region, the second flexing region more flexible in bending relative to the first flexing region than the first flexing region is flexible in bending relative to the first mounting portion.

19. (Original) The combination according to claim 18 wherein the first and second flexing regions are connected by a hinge portion.

20. (Original) The combination according to claim 19 wherein the first body has a length and the first and second flexing regions are spaced from each other lengthwise of the body.

21. (Original) The combination according to claim 14 further comprising a support to which the wall structure is operably mounted.

22. (Original) The combination according to claim 21 further comprising a thread drawing mechanism for engaging and drawing thread out of the receptacle.

23. (Original) The combination according to claim 22 further in combination with at least one component for generating stitching using thread drawn from the receptacle by the thread drawing mechanism.

24. (Original) In combination:

a) a wall structure mountable operably upon a support and defining a first receptacle within which a supply of thread is stored;

b) a body mounted operably on the wall structure and having a surface for generating a frictional resistance force on thread projecting from the supply in the receptacle;

c) a first adjusting element that is operable to reposition at least a part of the body relative to the wall to thereby vary a frictional resistance force generated by the body on the thread and having a first adjusting capability; and

d) a second adjusting element that is operable to reposition at least a part of the body relative to the wall to thereby vary a frictional resistance force generated by the body on the thread and having a second adjusting capability that is different than the first adjusting capability,

the first and second adjusting elements selectively interchangeably useable to thereby allow a user to select a desired adjusting capability with respect to a frictional resistance force generated by the body on the thread.

25. (Original) The combination according to claim 24 wherein the first and second adjusting elements respectively comprise first and second threaded adjustment screws each with a thread length, and the thread length of the first adjustment screw is different than the thread length of the second adjustment screw to account for the different adjusting capabilities of the first and second adjusting elements.

26. (Original) The combination according to claim 24 wherein wall structure has an outside wall surface, the first and second adjusting elements each have a fully tightened state and the surface of the body is spaced further from the outside wall surface with the first adjusting element in its fully tightened state than with the second adjusting element in its fully tightened state to thereby account for the different adjusting capabilities of the first and second adjusting elements.

27. (Original) The combination according to claim 26 wherein the first and second adjusting elements respectively comprise first and second threaded adjustment screws.

28. (New) A bobbin case assembly comprising:

a wall structure mountable operably upon a support and defining a first receptacle with a central axis and within which a supply of thread is stored; and

a tensioning assembly for exerting a frictional force on thread extending away from the receptacle to thereby resist drawing of the thread out of the receptacle,

the tensioning assembly comprising a first surface that bears against the thread extending away from the receptacle,

at least one of the wall structure and tensioning assembly comprising a second surface,

the thread extending away from the receptacle residing between the first and second surfaces so that the frictional force on the thread is generated between the first and second surfaces,

at least one of the first and second surfaces defined by a body that is bendable to thereby allow the one of the first and second surfaces to be moved selectively towards and away from the other of the first and second surfaces,

the body having a thickness in a radial direction relative to the central axis,

the body comprising a mounting portion and a flexing portion which projects away from the mounting portion,

the flexing portion bendable relative to the mounting portion and comprising a first flexing region and a second flexing region,

the body having a nonuniform thickness as a result of which at least a portion of the second flexing region is more flexible in bending relative to the first flexing region than the first flexing region is flexible in bending relative to the mounting portion,

the first surface defined on the second flexing region.

29. (New) The bobbin case assembly according to claim 28 wherein at least a portion of the second flexing region has a thickness less than the thickness of the first flexing region.

30. (New) The bobbin case assembly according to claim 29 wherein the first flexing region has a first thickness over a majority of the first flexing region, the second flexing region has a second thickness over a majority of the second flexing region, and the second thickness is less than the first thickness.

31. (New) A bobbin case assembly comprising:

a wall structure mountable operably upon a support and defining a first receptacle within which a supply of thread is stored; and

a tensioning assembly for exerting a frictional force on thread extending away from the receptacle to thereby resist drawing of the thread out of the receptacle,

the tensioning assembly comprising a first surface that bears against the thread extending away from the receptacle,

at least one of the wall structure and tensioning assembly comprising a second surface,

the thread extending away from the receptacle residing between the first and second surfaces so that the frictional force on the thread is generated between the first and second surfaces,

at least one of the first and second surfaces defined by a body that is bendable to thereby allow the one of the first and second surfaces to be moved selectively towards and away from the other of the first and second surfaces,

the body comprising a mounting portion and a flexing portion which projects away from the mounting portion,

the flexing portion bendable relative to the mounting portion and comprising a first flexing region and a second flexing region,

the second flexing region more flexible in bending relative to the first flexing region than the first flexing region is flexible in bending relative to the mounting portion,

the first surface defined on the second flexing region,

wherein the first and second flexing regions are connected by a discrete hinge portion at which the second flexing region bends in a predetermined manner relative to the first flexing region.

32. (New) The bobbin case assembly according to claim 31 wherein the body has a cross-sectional area as viewed in a plane extending transversely to the length of the body, and the cross-sectional area of the hinge portion is locally reduced.

33. (New) The bobbin case assembly according to claim 31 wherein a second discrete hinge portion is defined on the body.

34. (New) A bobbin case assembly comprising:

a wall structure mountable operably upon a support and defining a first receptacle within which a supply of thread is stored; and

a tensioning assembly for exerting a frictional force on thread extending away from the receptacle to thereby resist drawing of the thread out of the receptacle,

the tensioning assembly comprising a first surface that bears against the thread extending away from the receptacle,

at least one of the wall structure and tensioning assembly comprising a second surface,

the thread extending away from the receptacle residing between the first and second surfaces so that the frictional force on the thread is generated between the first and second surfaces,

at least one of the first and second surfaces defined by a body that is bendable to thereby allow the one of the first and second surfaces to be moved selectively towards and away from the other of the first and second surfaces,

the body comprising a mounting portion and a flexing portion which projects away from the mounting portion,

the flexing portion bendable relative to the mounting portion,

wherein the body comprises a discrete hinge portion at which the body bends in a predetermined manner to allow the at least one of the first and second surfaces to be moved selectively towards and away from the other of the first and second surfaces.

35. (New) A bobbin case assembly comprising:

a wall structure mountable operably upon a support and defining a first receptacle within which a supply of thread is stored; and

a tensioning assembly for exerting a frictional force on thread extending away from the receptacle to thereby resist drawing of the thread out of the receptacle,

the tensioning assembly comprising a first surface that bears against the thread extending away from the receptacle,

at least one of the wall structure and tensioning assembly comprising a second surface,

the thread extending away from the receptacle residing between the first and second surfaces so that the frictional force on the thread is generated between the first and second surfaces,

at least one of the first and second surfaces defined by a body that is bendable to thereby allow the one of the first and second surfaces to be moved selectively towards and away from the other of the first and second surfaces,

the body comprising a mounting portion and a flexing portion which projects away from the mounting portion,

the flexing portion bendable relative to the mounting portion and comprising a first flexing region and a second flexing region,

the second flexing region more flexible in bending relative to the first flexing region than the first flexing region is flexible in bending relative to the mounting portion,

the first surface defined on the second flexing region,

wherein the body has a cross-sectional area as viewed in a plane extending transversely to the length of the body that is other than square or rectangular.